

Klein, Wildcat offense look for one final season performance

Sean Frye
staff writer

What a season it has been for the Wildcats' offense. They started off looking horrendous against Football Championship Subdivision opponent Eastern Kentucky, but nevertheless escaped with a win. After a bye week, the offense put together six straight impressive performances that ended in wins.

They took a step back against Oklahoma, where, after taking a 17-14 lead in the second quarter, they failed to score the rest of the game and fell to the Sooners 58-17.

One week later, the Wildcats took their second of only two losses this entire season to the Oklahoma State Cowboys. However, it was the defense that took a step back in that game, as the offense put up 45 points and had a chance to win the game on the final play.

After those two losses, the Wildcats never took another defeat, earning wins against Texas A&M in a four-over-time thriller, Texas and Iowa State. However, the Texas game only saw the offense put up 121 yards total, which led to a very angry Bill Snyder in the postgame press conference.

There, he revealed that quarterback Collin "Honey Badger" Klein had missed practice for two straight weeks

because of injury concerns.

After their second bye week of the year, the Wildcats' offense rebounded once again and put up an impressive performance on Senior Day to overcome the Iowa State Cyclones and seemingly put the team in line for a Bowl Championship Series at-large bid.

However, the theme of the season for the offense has been adversity. They have been picked as the underdogs in eight of their 12 games this year, and have won six of those matchups.

Last Sunday, the gods that control football stuck it to the Wildcats again, as the BCS passed over K-State and put Michigan and Virginia Tech, both at-large teams, in the Sugar Bowl.

Now set to face the No. 6 University of Arkansas Razorbacks in the Cotton Bowl, the Wildcats will likely be the underdog again in their final game, which should be a BCS bowl in the eyes of many fans, players and members of the media.

However, any time Bill Snyder has been given more than six days to prepare for a team this year, as he did before the Kent State and Iowa State games, the offense came out firing on all cylinders. In the two games following bye weeks this year, the offense has totaled 67 points and 694 yards of total offense.

Klein in particular has ex-

celled in these situations, as he has combined for five total touchdowns and 457 total yards of offense.

Simply put, anytime this offense gets ample time to prepare for their opponent, they succeed.

This time, the Wildcats have over a month to prepare for the Razorbacks, and not only will preparing schematically be important, but healing the bumps and bruises of a 12-game, 14-week long season will be crucial for the Wildcats.

One of the prime examples of players that need healing is Klein. As mentioned earlier, he had to miss two weeks of practice this year because of the beating he takes game in and game out. So far this year, he has not taken a quarterback slide even once. Giving him a month off and allowing him time to heal and return to 100 percent physically and mentally will almost certainly put the Wildcats in the best position all year to succeed on the offensive side of the ball.

Ultimately, the Wildcats' offensive unit has taken everything in stride. Whether it has been being underdogs in games that they ended up winning, or being bypassed for berth into a BCS bowl game, K-State has pinned back their ears and done what many thought was unreachable this year, win ten games and go to a bowl game.



Logan M. Jones | Collegian

Wildcat receiver **Tramaine Thompson** crosses the goal line after catching a pass and running it into the end zone, completing a 68-yard touchdown play. Thompson had two receptions for 87 yards on Saturday, helping K-State defeat Iowa State, 30-23.

Razorbacks coming off loss to LSU still a complete, sound team



In what will be the final stand for the No. 8 Wildcats, they will face the No. 6 University of Arkansas Razorbacks in Arlington, Texas at Cowboys Stadium on Jan. 6, 2012. The Razorbacks finished third in the Southeastern Conference behind No. 1 LSU and No. 2 Alabama, who are playing for the Bowl Championship Series National Title. They will be the most talented team the Wildcats have faced since their epic showdown in Stillwater, Okla. against the No. 3 Oklahoma State Cowboys, where K-State lost 52-45 despite having a shot at the

end zone from five yards away on the last play of the game.

The Razorbacks' only two losses on the year have come at the hands of the Tigers and the Crimson Tide. With those two teams playing the BCS National Championship, Arkansas was left ineligible for a BCS bowl due to the fact that no more than two teams from a single conference can attend BCS bowl games. The Razorbacks lost 38-14 and 41-17 to Alabama and LSU, respectively.

With the two losses to the top two teams in the country being their only black mark, the Razorbacks have been considered one of the best teams in the country from start to finish this season. They opened the season with three wins against Missouri State, New Mexico and Troy, who they beat by a combined score of 141-38. They then fell to 3-1 overall when the Crimson Tide hosted them.

Following their defeat to Alabama, the Razorbacks rattled off seven straight wins, including victories against then No. 14 Texas A&M, then No. 15 Auburn and then No. 9 South Carolina.

On Nov. 25, which ended up being the last game of the regular season for the Razorbacks, they went to Baton Rouge, La., where No. 1 LSU was set to host them. At that time, Arkansas was the No. 3 team in the country. The Razorbacks took a 14-0 lead early in the game, but the Tigers stormed back for the win.

The Cotton Bowl will be the first time the Razorbacks will see the field of play since that loss to LSU, so they will be more than anxious to avenge that loss and show the country that they truly are one of the best teams.

Junior quarterback Tyler Wilson has led the aerial assault for the Razorbacks,

racking up 3,422 yards through the air and 22 passing touchdowns while also completing over 63 percent of his passes.

Wilson's primary target is senior wide receiver Jarius Wright. The standout receiver has hauled in 63 catches for 1,029 yards and 11 touchdowns. Joe Adams has also been impressive, as he has pulled down 49 catches of his own.

On the ground, Arkansas employs a dual running back system. Junior running back Dennis Johnson leads the team in both carries and

yards, with 101 and 637, respectively. However, fellow junior running back Ronnie Wingo Jr. follows Johnson closely with 95 carries for 440 yards. Both backs have three touchdown carries on the year.

Defensively, linebacker Jerry Franklin leads the team in tackles with 93, including 10 tackles for loss. Defensive end Jake Bequette, while only racking up 25 total tackles, has a team best eight sacks of the year, over 36 percent of the team's total sack count of 22. For pass coverage, safety Tramain Thomas is the man

to look out for, as he leads the team with five interceptions on the year.

Overall, the Razorbacks are a very complete, fundamentally sound team. They have few obvious weaknesses, and they have beaten every team they've faced this year that is not playing for a national title. Expect the Razorbacks to be one of the toughest, if not the toughest team the Wildcats have faced all year.

Sean Frye is a sophomore in journalism and mass communications. Please send your comments to sports@spub.ksu.edu

COTTON | Coach Snyder remembers fan support for previous bowl berth

Continued from B1

Currie, Cotton Bowl chairman Tommy Bain said it's an honor to host the Wildcats.

"I want to congratulate coach Snyder on a tremendous year that Kansas State has had, and also the fact that they've won themselves into this game," Bain said in his opening statement. "They are deserving of a BCS bowl, and, I'll be honest, we consider

ourselves just like a BCS bowl. This year we'll have No. 6 vs. No. 8, which is the third-best matchup outside of the national championship and the Fiesta Bowl."

Head coach Bill Snyder said the Cotton Bowl memory that sticks out to him centers around the Wildcat's fans.

"I remember the last Cotton Bowl we were at, there was somewhere in the vicinity of 55,000 Kansas State fans,

which is absolutely amazing, particularly when the tickets are so hard to come by, and they find a way," Snyder said. "That was very impressive for me and for all K-Staters, and it was very impressive for the Cotton Bowl."

The Wildcats will take on the Arkansas Razorbacks on Friday, Jan. 6, 2012 at 7 p.m. The game will take place in Arlington, Texas in Cowboys Stadium.

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03

Around K-State host its season



Evert Nelson | Collegian

Many extra helmets were available for players during the Nov. 12 game against Texas A&M.

BCS passes on Wildcats, K-State heads to Cotton Bowl

Corbin McGuire
staff writer

The K-State football team's selection to the AT&T Cotton Bowl after being passed on for a Bowl Championship Series Bowl lost the Wildcats a chance at giving head coach Bill Snyder his first BCS bowl victory and lost the Big 12 Conference a substantial amount of money.

According to the BCS's 2011-2012 media guide, the Oklahoma State Cowboys' automatic qualification to the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl will bring the Big 12 approximately \$22.3 million. The Big 12, according to its official 2010-2011 handbook, will split the money evenly between all current conference members after deducting the pre-determined travel expenses of all teams within the conference participating in a bowl game.

The Allstate Sugar Bowl lost the chance at receiving its contractually obligated Southeastern Conference champion due to LSU going to the BCS national championship, which allowed the bowl committee to select two teams from a group of qualifying at-large teams.

A team, to qualify as an at-large team, must win at least nine regular-season games and be ranked in the top 14 of the BCS standings.

The schools that qualified as an at-large team, after specific BCS guidelines ruled out any additional SEC teams, are the Wildcats, the Stan-

ford Cardinal, the Boise State Broncos, the Virginia Tech Hokies, the Baylor Bears, the Michigan Wolverines and the Oklahoma Sooners.

The Cardinal received the Fiesta Bowl's at-large bid, leaving only two remaining at-large bids, both to the

"I want to congratulate coach Snyder on a tremendous year that Kansas State has had, and also the fact that they've won themselves into this game."

Tommy Bain
Cotton Bowl chairman

Sugar Bowl. The Sugar Bowl chose the Wolverines and the Hokies despite the Wildcats' higher BCS ranking, stronger schedule, according to Jeff Sagarin's rankings and more wins against ranked opponents than both teams.

As the at-large payout reads in the BCS's media guide, the Wildcats would have brought \$6.1 million to the Big 12 had they been selected to the Sugar Bowl, in addition to what the Cowboys brought in as an automatic qualifier.

Nonetheless, the Wildcats slid to the Cotton Bowl

that pays participating teams \$3.625 million each, nearly \$2.5 million less than its BCS counterpart.

In an article on nola.com, the CEO of the Sugar Bowl, Paul Hoolahan, said that rankings alone do not determine bowl selections. However, this year's Sugar Bowl is only the second BCS bowl in its 14-year history to consist of two teams ranked outside the top 10.

"We had to put together what we think makes the most sense for our bowl," Hoolahan said Sunday after the BCS bowl selections were announced. "There are reasons we do things that are way beyond the obvious."

ESPN analyst Kirk Herbstreit was skeptical over the matchup and the reasons behind it.

"You look at Michigan and Virginia Tech both bringing a lot of fans. But is that what it's come down to?" Herbstreit said. "Kellen Moore and Boise State, Baylor and Robert Griffin, Kansas State and Bill Snyder is the coach of the year. But the BCS at-large selection is all about how teams come into cities and fill up hotel rooms."

All of this despite the fact the K-State sold out its 12,500 allotted bowl game tickets before the bowl selections were announced.

In a teleconference with head coach Bill Snyder and athletics director John

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TIPOFF

Undefeated men's basketball team to take on West Virginia in Wichita



Photos by Tommy Theis | Collegian

Rodney McGruder puts up a layup against George Washington University on Dec. 1 in Bramlage Coliseum. McGruder is the most played Wildcat with 151 minutes on the court so far this season.



Frank Martin shows his disappointment in the team during the first half of the game against George Washington University on Dec. 1. The Wildcats won the game, 69-56.

Mark Kern
sports editor

Coming off a tough victory in their first road game of the season, the Wildcat men's basketball team will see a familiar foe coaching on the other bench tonight in West Virginia coach Bob Huggins. Huggins coached at K-State during the 2006-2007 season.

Head coach Frank Martin talked about the influence that Huggins had on him.

"He's an incredible human being. He's a big part of my personal success," Martin said. West Virginia (4-2) is coming

off a loss to No. 21 Mississippi State. The Mountaineers were led by Kevin Jones, who had 14 points and nine rebounds in Saturday's loss. So far in the season, the Mountaineers have not been shooting the basketball and that has been one of the main reasons the team has struggled early. Even though West Virginia is not off to a great start, Martin knows they will present a huge challenge.


"They've got a team of young pups," he said, "but they've also got three guys that have played in the Final Four."

K-State (5-0) defeated the Virginia Tech Hokies last Sunday

69-61. Senior Jamar Samuels led the Wildcats with 17 points and 14 rebounds. Samuels, the reigning Big 12 Conference player of the week, is ready for the match-up against the Mountaineers.


"It's definitely a rivalry now," Samuels said. "It's going to be a very exciting game on Thursday." The game could indeed be the start of a rivalry as West Virginia will be joining the Big 12 in the future.

The Wildcats will look to keep their undefeated start as they play in the first game of the Wichita Wildcat Classic. The game will take place at 8 tonight in Wichita at the INTRUST Bank Arena.



K-STATE VS. ARKANSAS

WHEN: FRIDAY, JAN. 6, 2012 , 7:00PM CT
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TELEVISION: FOX



MATCHING UP

Mark Kern
sports editor

K-STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. ARKANSAS RUSH DEFENSE

The Wildcats have been by their rushing attack all season long. Klein, who has rushed for 26 touchdowns, is the leading rusher with 1099 yards on the season. K-State is much more balanced as John Hubert gives the Wildcats a formidable one-two punch. Hubert is coming off a game in which he rushed for 120 yards and a touchdown.

The Razorback defense gave up 174 yards a game and allowed teams to average 4.5 yards per carry.

The Wildcats have been able to move the ball all season on all of the teams that they played. Expect for this trend to continue as the Wildcats should be able to establish the run against Arkansas.

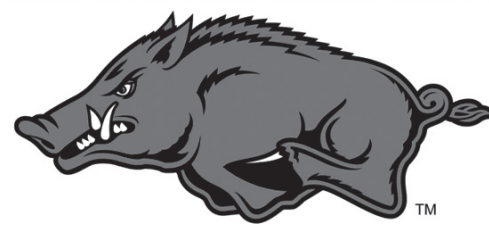


ADVANTAGE: K-STATE

ARKANSAS OFFENSE VS. K-STATE PASS DEFENSE

K-State has struggled against offenses that can throw the ball. Brandon Weeden and Landry Jones each threw for 500 yards against the Wildcats. The Wildcats arm-matched up against a great passing offense led by Arkansas quarterback Tyler Wilson. Wilson, earlier in the season threw for 511 yards against Texas A&M. He has receivers Joe Adams, Greg Childs and Colbi Hamilton to throw the ball to and all of these guys have the ability to make big plays. Nigel Malone and the rest of the K-State secondary are going to have quite the test.

The Razorbacks have too many weapons in their passing attack and will put up yards and points against the Wildcats secondary.



ADVANTAGE: ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS RUSH OFFENSE VS. K-STATE RUSH DEFENSE

Going into the preseason, the Arkansas offense appeared to be a national title contending offense. The Razorbacks were counting on Knile Davis, who rushed for 1,282 yards and 13 touchdowns in the 2010 season. This season, they are led by Dennis Johnson, who rushed for 637 yards.

The Wildcats rush defense has been the strength of their defense as they have held opponents to only 131.4 rush yards per game. A lot of the reason is that the speed the linebackers have has enabled them to make more plays in backfield.

The Wildcats must contain the run and not allow the Razorbacks to run the ball. Expect Arthur Brown and the rest of the defense to hold the Arkansas rushing attack in check.



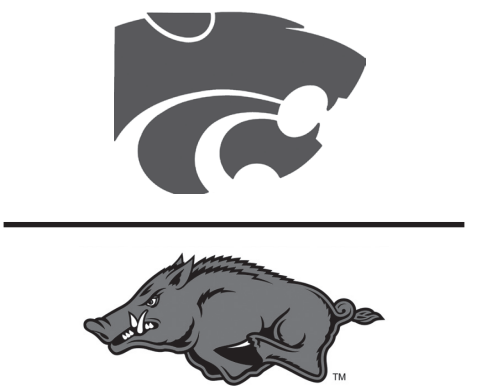
ADVANTAGE: K-STATE

K-STATE SPECIAL TEAMS VS. ARKANSAS SPECIAL TEAMS

The Wildcats and the Razorbacks are both are very good in this facet of the game. Arkansas has one of the best returners in the country in Joe Adams, while K-State has shown the ability to make plays in the return game with Tramaine Thompson filling in for the injured Tyler Lockett.

It will be key for Ryan Doerr to punt the ball high in the air to allow his defense to get down the field and not allow Adams to make the big play.

Both teams have strengths in this department and the key for both will be not allowing the big kick-off return game.



ADVANTAGE: NEITHER

K-STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. ARKANSAS PASS DEFENSE

The Wildcats have improved on passing the ball significantly this year. Collin Klein threw for only 1745 yards on the season, but many of those came at the end of the years as the Wildcats made strides in the passing game.

The Wildcats will go up against an Arkansas defense that only give up 197.1 yards per game. Defensive back Tramain Thomas leads the Razorbacks with five interceptions. Arkansas' defense, though, has not seen many passing offenses on the season. With teams like LSU and Alabama running the ball so much, the SEC is a different style of play.

If Klein has time to make the throws, he should be able to make some plays. However, do not expect the Wildcats to throw the ball 40 times in the game, so look for a push.



ADVANTAGE: K-STATE

INTANGIBLES

The Wildcats are led by Big 12 coach of the year Bill Snyder. A lot of the Wildcats' success is because they always do the little things to win ball games and limit the plays that hurt themselves. That will be a key as they face a dangerous Arkansas team, but also a team going through some inner turmoil.

The Razorbacks have lost their offensive, defensive and special teams coordinator. This could play a major role as they prepare for the game. Without these coaches, it will be tough for Arkansas in their preparations for the Wildcats.

The Wildcats have their complete staff and are playing some of their best ball while the Razorbacks are coming off a 17-41 loss to LSU



ADVANTAGE: K-STATE

FINAL SCORE PREDICTION: 35-31 K-STATE



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